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*United States Department of the Interior* ★ HAROLD L. ICKES, *Secretary*

JAN 29 1934
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# The DEEPENING CRISIS in Education

U.S. Office of education

LEAFLET NUMBER 44

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## . . . LET US RESOLVE!

★ THIS YEAR more than at any time in our recent history the quality, yes, even the existence of schools in many communities, is at stake. * * * There are very few parts of the country in which schools, for want of funds, have not been compelled to shorten the school term. We find ourselves in the grip of a social difficulty from which we shall extricate ourselves only with great effort and pain.

Schools do not belong exclusively to the children, the teachers, or the superintendents. They are the common property of us all, and in the long run there must be public assent for every important change of educational policy and for every provision for financial support. What is done about the schools in this present emergency will therefore be determined around our firesides and in our public gatherings. I call your attention to the facts in this leaflet and ask you to consider measures to relieve the serious emergency disclosed.

My plea to the men and women who earn and spend the incomes from our fields and factories, whether blessed or not with the personal care of little children, is to remember your responsibility to the youth of this land. * * * Let us resolve not to make the children pay for the depression!

GEORGE F. ZOOK

COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION

JAN 29 1934
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# Casualties of the Crisis

THE DEPRESSION reached our schools later than it did industry, trade, and agriculture. It is causing greatest havoc in the schools *after* recovery has been inaugurated in other departments of our national life. Here are some casualties of the crisis in education:

One hundred thousand more children are this year denied all educational opportunities because of closing schools.

Shortened school terms will put at least a million other children on learning rations close to the level of mental starvation.

One of every two cities has been compelled to drop some important school service.

One of every three teachers must work this year for less than the "blanket code" minimum for unskilled labor.

Twenty-five thousand teachers have been dropped, while a million more pupils have come into the schools.

Two hundred thousand certificated teachers are unemployed.

Two hundred and fifty-nine school districts in 29 States have been compelled to default on bonds.

The number of pupils per teacher is being increased—in 5 States there are on the average more than 40 pupils per teacher.

Details of the extent of the crisis in education will be found condensed in the pages of this leaflet.

## The President Speaks

"The main point is that we need to make indefinitely better the average education which the average child now receives. This crisis can be met, but not in a day or a year, and education is a vital factor in the meeting of it."—*From an address of President Roosevelt delivered by radio from the White House to the Third Annual Women's Conference on Current Problems, meeting in New York City, October 13, 1933.*



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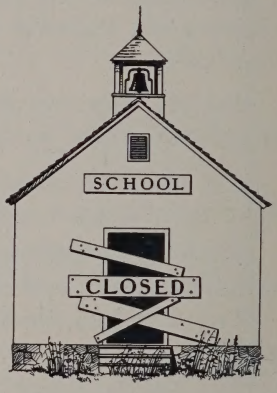
# Children Without Schools

ONE hundred thousand children are deprived of educational opportunity this fall because of the closing of schools due to lack of funds.

More than 1,650,000 children, 6 to 13 years old, are not in school in normal years.

Also there are 521,000 children, 14 and 15 years old, without schooling in normal years.

That makes a total of 2,280,000 American children of school age according to most compulsory education laws.




They ought to be in school, but they are not.

Nearly 2,000 rural schools in 24 States (see map, pp. 8 and 9) failed to open this fall.

Many private and parochial schools are closing. Approximately 24 Catholic schools have closed, affecting 3,000 children.

Sixteen institutions of higher education have been discontinued since last year.

Estimates indicate that 1,500 commercial schools and colleges have closed.

In some communities free public schools have of necessity become tuition schools, admitting only those children whose parents can pay the rate asked. For example, in one town of 15,000 population, grade-school tuition was reported as $3 per child per month; high-school tuition, $5.50 per month. In this town at least 200 children whose parents could not pay the tuition charges were being denied an education.

# School Terms Shortened

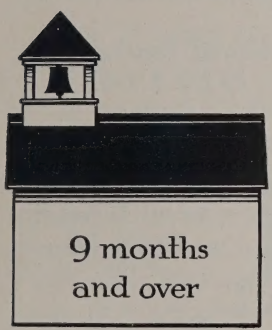
BECAUSE of lack of available funds 1 of every 4 cities has shortened its school term.

Seven hundred and fifteen rural schools are expected to run less than 3 months this year.

Reductions in length of terms in rural schools are being made in face of the fact that the terms have been far from adequate; in 1930 rural schools for 1,500,000 children were open 6 months or less.

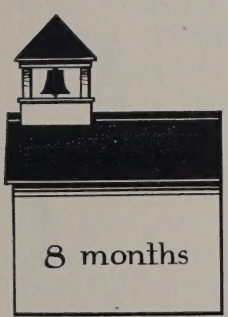
New reductions of term in city schools have come on the heels of a constant succession of reductions. Terms in practically every great American city are today 1 or 2 months shorter than they were 70 to 100 years ago.

Inadequate school terms for American children stand in sharp contrast to the school terms common for children in European countries: United States, 172 days (city, 184 days, rural, 162 days); France, 200 days; Sweden, 210 days; Germany, 246 days; England, 210 days; Denmark, 246 days.

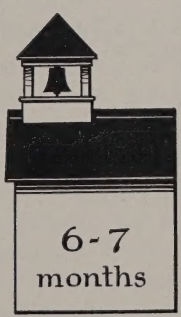



15,747,542

Prospects for the coming school year: *Michigan:* 90 percent of schools will shorten terms. *Nebraska:* 15 percent of schools will cut at least 1 month. *Missouri:* 1,600 rural schools face early closing.

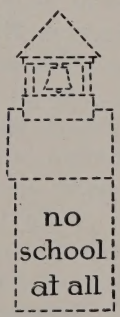



5,245,092

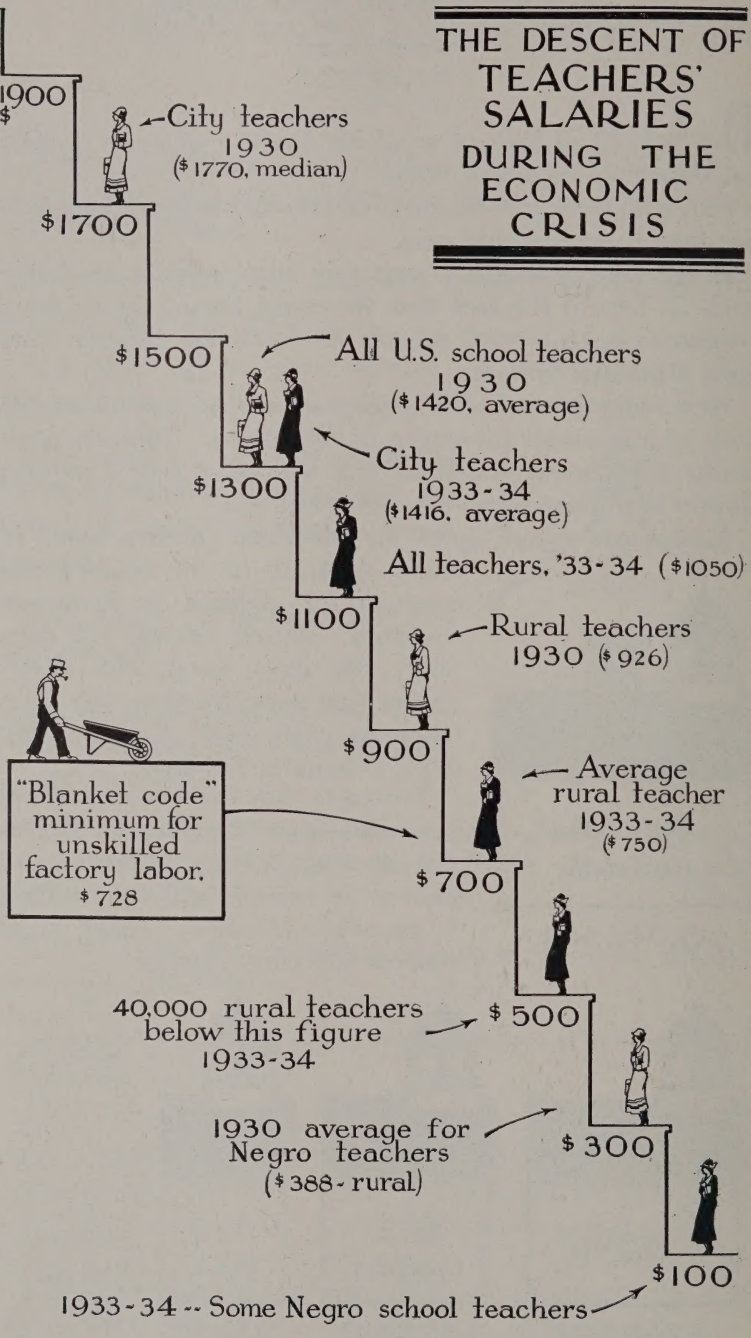



1,423,582

804,582




2,280,000


THE DESCENT OF TEACHERS' SALARIES DURING THE ECONOMIC CRISIS
1900 $
City teachers 1930 ($1770, median)
$1700
$1500
All U.S. school teachers 1930 ($1420, average)
City teachers 1933-34 ($1416, average)
$1300
All teachers, '33-34 ($1050)
$1100
Rural teachers 1930 ($926)
$900
"Blanket code" minimum for unskilled factory labor. $728
Average rural teacher 1933-34 ($750)
$700
40,000 rural teachers below this figure 1933-34
$500
1930 average for Negro teachers ($388 - rural)
$300
$100
1933-34 -- Some Negro school teachers

# Salaries Going Lower

MOST PEOPLE have a vague idea that teachers' salaries are low. Few know how low they are. Almost no one realizes how low they have gone by comparison with other standards. For example: An unskilled factory worker laboring for a year at the *minimum* "blanket code" rate would receive $728, which is little enough!

One of every four American teachers is now teaching at a rate of less than $750 per year.

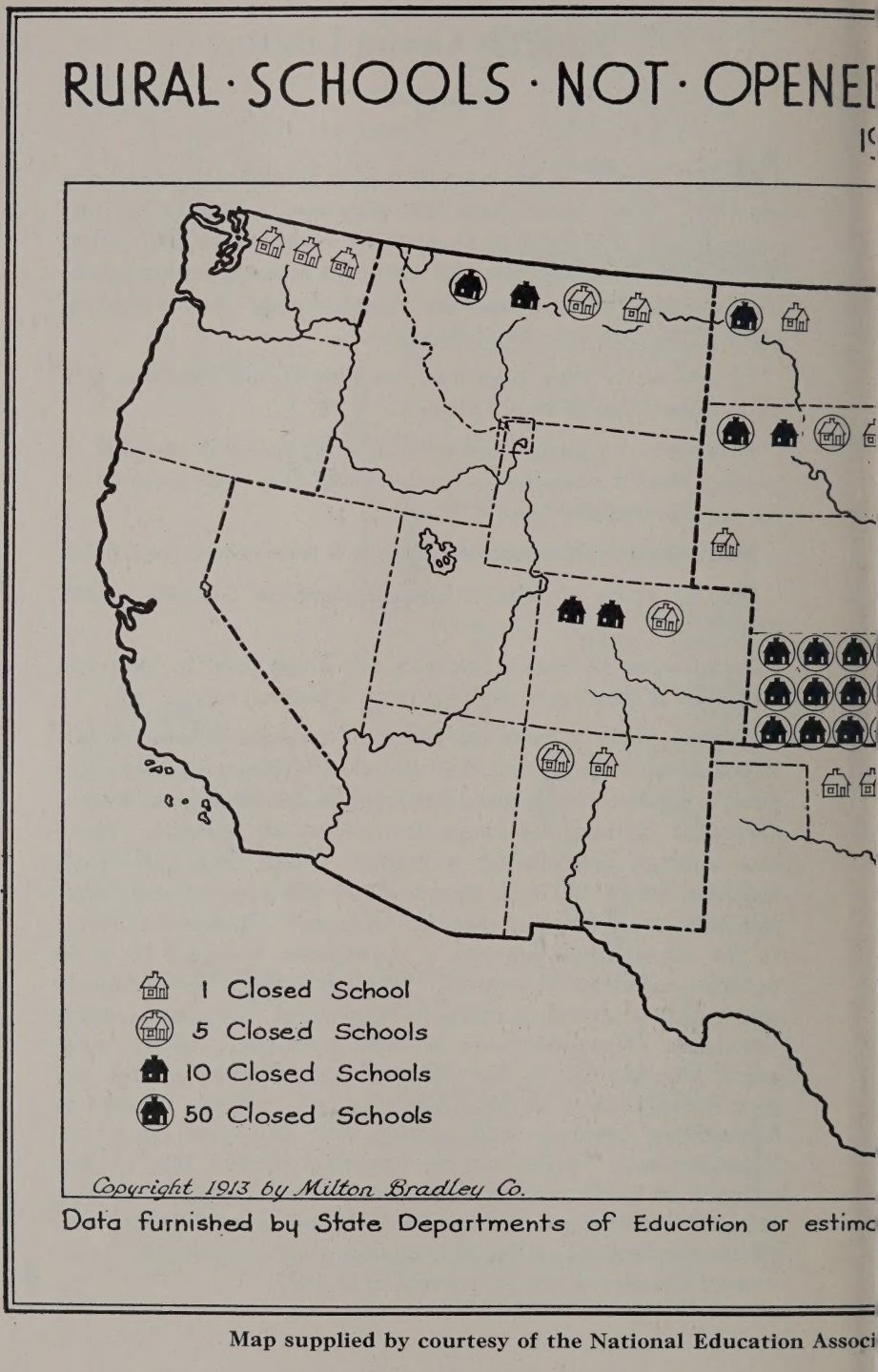
Prospects for early closing of schools make it possible to predict that 1 of every 3 teachers will this year receive for expert services less than $750.

More than 84,000 rural teachers will receive less than $450.

One of every 13 Negro teachers receives $25 per month or less.

In at least 18 States teachers are being paid in warrants cashable at discounts ranging from 5 percent up.

Recent State reports on teachers' salaries—*Arizona:* Reduced 20 to 40 percent. Additional reductions probable this year. Teachers have lost 10 percent in discounting warrants. *Colorado:* Reductions range from 5 to 20 percent. More lost through discounting warrants. *Iowa:* One half of all teachers (1933–34) will receive $750 per year or less; legal minimum now $40 per month. *Kansas:* "Reduced perhaps to the extent of 30 percent." *Louisiana:* Reduced 10 to 40 percent—average 20 percent. *Michigan:* Have been reduced, and will be reduced as much as 60 percent unless more aid is provided. Warrants have brought additional losses. *Missouri:* One teacher in four in rural communities taught last year from 1 to 4 months without pay. Three fourths of elementary teachers will receive less this year than the "blanket code" minimum for unskilled factory labor. Ten percent of rural teachers have contracted to teach for less than $320 this year. *Nebraska:* Salaries reduced 40 percent. *Oklahoma:* Salaries reduced approximately 24 percent. *Tennessee:* Salaries down 25 percent this year.


RURAL · SCHOOLS · NOT · OPENED
1 Closed School
5 Closed Schools
10 Closed Schools
50 Closed Schools
Copyright 1913 by Milton Bradley Co.
Data furnished by State Departments of Education or estimc

Map supplied by courtesy of the National Education Associ

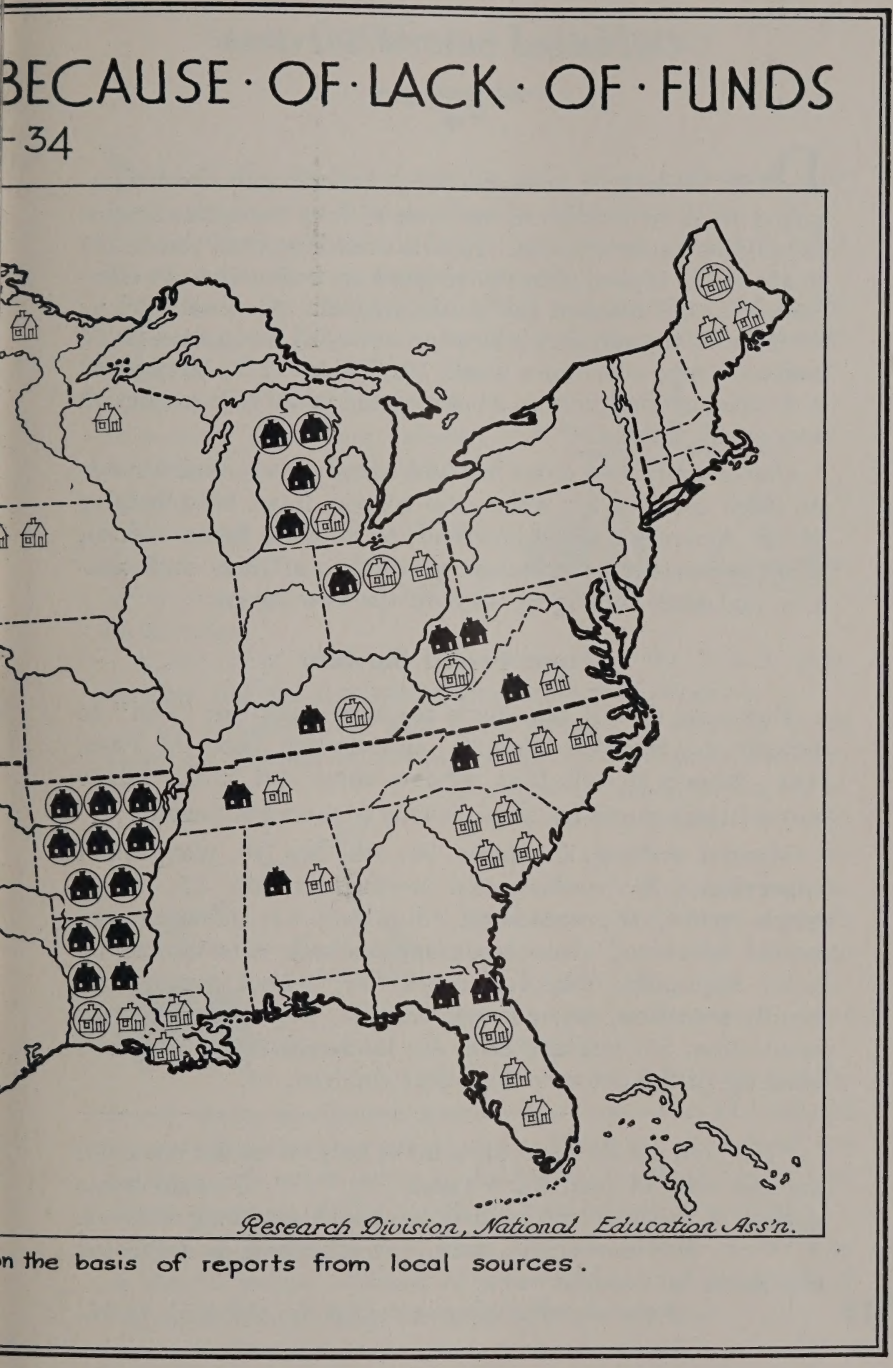



Diagram based on reports received since October 1, 1933.

# Curtailed School Services

DUE TO lack of available funds schools have been compelled to drop overboard services of long recognized value in building better citizens. Here is what happened since 1930 in about 700 typical cities: 67 reduced art instruction, 36 eliminated it; 110 reduced the music program, 29 eliminated it; 81 reduced the physical education work, 28 eliminated it; 65 reduced home economics work, 19 eliminated it; 58 reduced industrial art instruction, 24 eliminated it; 89 reduced health service, 22 eliminated it.

One of every two cities has had to reduce or eliminate one or more services by which the schools have been helping future Americans to be healthier, to be abler home makers, more competent contributors to the life of their communities, and more intelligent users of the new leisure.

## Time Tested Services

How long does it take for a so-called "fad" or "frill" to become an accepted service? Information from El Paso, Tex., schools reveals that services some call "frills" have proved their worth for the following numbers of years:

Manual training, 25; music, 35; athletics, 40; playground supervision, 20; cooking and sewing, 25; art, 35; school lunch rooms, 18; vocational education, 25; debating and public speaking, since beginning; school entertainments, since beginning; school libraries, 20; school nurses and health attention, 15; evening schools, 15; supervisors for instruction, 20; military drill, 40; kindergartens, 30; special teaching of the defective and deaf children, 12.

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"It would not do the State a bit of harm if we did not build another mile of road for 3 years. * * * I could name dozens of other activities that we could get along without. * * * But one single year that education is neglected can never be brought back.

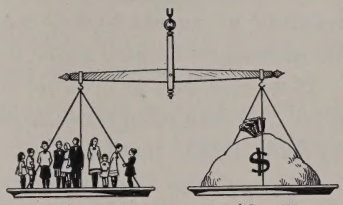
—*From a public statement made by Alfred E. Smith.*

# More Children—Less Money

SEVEN hundred and twenty-eight thousand more children were enrolled in high school in 1932 than 1930.

Elementary schools enrolled 115,000 fewer children in 1932 than in 1930 (first decrease on record).

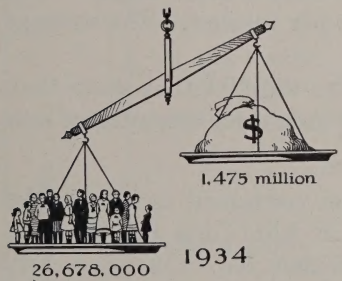
Net gain: 613,000 pupils. This is more than the entire population of Montana. It is more than the combined population of Atlanta, Des Moines, and Salt Lake City. It is more than were enrolled in all our public high schools in 1900.




Today 93 of every 100 city children enroll in high school; 55 of every 100 rural children do likewise.

Abolition of child labor in industry by the N.R.A. puts another 100,000 children on the high-school doorstep.

*Any industry faced with rapid increase in business would expect an increase in total operating costs. Schools, forced to carry an increased burden, are required to carry on with less funds.*




Our Nation's schools are endeavoring to give adequate instruction to an army of pupils increased since 1930 by more than 1,000,000 pupils on current expenses decreased about $368,000,000.

To teach 25,600,000 public-school pupils the United States 3 years ago spent $10,600,000 (current expense) per school day. This year the schools are teaching a larger number of children on $8,500,000 per school day, a decrease of $2,100,000 per day (about 20 percent).

*There never was such a demand for educational opportunity as there is today. Because of more children and less money it has never been so difficult to satisfy that demand.*

# Fewer Teachers

APPROXIMATELY 200,000 certificated teachers are unemployed.

City schools employ today 18,600 fewer teachers, it is estimated, than in 1931.

Thousands more have been dismissed from private schools and colleges.

If we decided to operate city schools today with the same number of pupils to a teacher that we had in 1930, it would be necessary to hire more than 26,000 additional teachers.

If we decided to provide educaton for the 2,280,000 children 6 to 15 years of age not now in school, it would be necessary to add 76,000 teachers.

Thus, if the United States were really determined to give all of its children the minimum essentials of a modern education it would be necessary to engage one half of all certificated teachers now unemployed.

Businesses that increase take on more help: school enrollment has increased more than a million since 1930, but the number of teachers, city and rural, has decreased 25,000.

Teachers are unemployed, but classes grow larger. One State has an average of 44 pupils per teacher. The average for 5 States is more than 40.

Teachers are unemployed despite the fact that more than 1,500,000 children will this year be taught for 6 months or less.

## Sources

Facts on the crisis in education contained in this leaflet are derived from a recent Office of Education poll of State superintendents of schools (Circular No. 119) and city superintendents (Circular No. 125); the biennial surveys of education; National Education Association study of salaries of rural school teachers and principals; advices from foreign education authorities (Bulletin, 1933, No. 14, The Effects of the Economic Depression on Education in Other Countries); 1930 U.S. census; a recent National Education Association study of rural schools; reports from the Bond Buyer; and other sources.

# Debts

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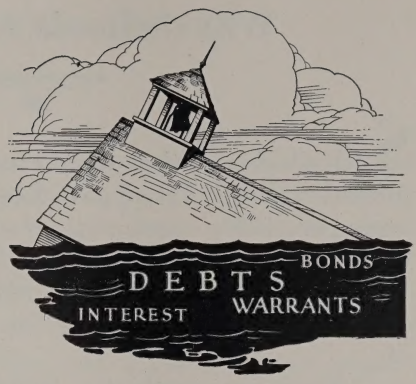


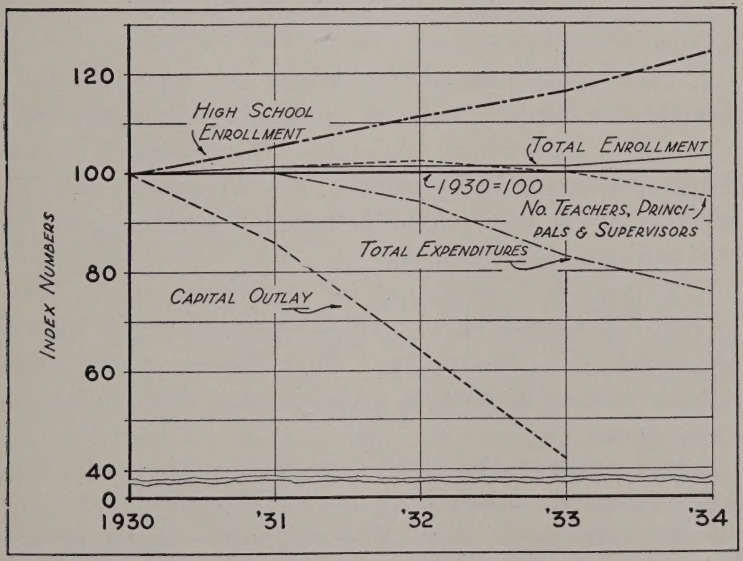

TWO HUNDRED and fifty-nine school districts in 29 States have had to default on their indebtedness.

Some cities, compelled to refinance, have had to pay 6 percent instead of 4 percent interest, the former rate.

To pay teachers when there was no cash available school districts issued interest-bearing warrants. Total unpaid warrants, $40,000,000.

One State increased its payments of *interest* on its school debt from $7,000,000 to $10,000,000 in two years.

From school funds $150,000,000 will have to be paid in 1933–34 to adults for interest on warrants and bonds. Not $1 of that sum can be used for teaching children.




**Trends in Expenditures, Enrollment and Teacher Employment.**

# Why Schools Lack Funds

SCHOOLS are the most completely local of American public services. To support them the most completely local source of income—real estate (farms, homes, stores, factories, etc.)—has been taxed.

Depression, crushing local real-estate values, is in turn crushing education. Paying for schools is difficult because of:

1. *Top-heavy mortgages.*—Fixed payments due on mortgages on farms and homes have become heavier and heavier burdens as incomes declined. As a result many a citizen has been forced into this bitter dilemma: Shall I save my home or farm or shall I save the school?

2. *Tax delinquencies.*—Many citizens have been unable to pay taxes. Delinquencies in taxes for schools run as high as $100,000,000 in a single State.

3. *Tax limitations.*—Alarmed at the prospect of losing their homes or farms because of failure to pay taxes, citizens have secured legislation sharply limiting the tax rate on real estate and thereby the amount which can be raised to pay for schools.

4. *Closed banks.*—Closing of banks was an added blow. School funds frozen in banks in one State total $15,000,000.

5. *Lower assessments.*—Decrease of real-estate values brings a decrease in assessed values for taxing purposes, which brings a decrease in the amount which a given tax rate will provide for schools.

6. *Differences in wealth.*—A tax of $10 on every $1,000 of property for school support would produce $58 per child in one State; $457 in another. Thus States stagger under unequal burdens in trying to maintain equality of educational opportunity.

School patrons have turned to State governments for help. A few States have come to the rescue of hard-pressed school districts. In most cases relief and other needs prevent States from rendering assistance to schools.

# The Situation Abroad

THE OFFICE of Education has recently received reports on school conditions as influenced by the world-wide depression from practically all countries. Following are brief excerpts from the forthcoming Bulletin, 1933, No. 14, The Effects of the Economic Depression on Education in Other Countries.

*Mexico.*—"Renewed activity and plans for more rapid development." Thousands of new Mexican rural schools have been established in the last 10 years.

*Australia.*—"No schools have been unnecessarily closed, many classes are increased in size, and standards of instruction and attendance are being maintained."

*England and Wales.*—"Lowered teachers' salaries are not regarded as permanent; * * * growth of junior secondary schools was remarkable; adult education continued to expand; erection of more beautiful, effective, and better school buildings; and more equitable arrangements for secondary school fees was adopted."

*Irish Free State.*—"The educational situation is continuing to improve."

*New Zealand.*—"No public and only a few private schools have closed."

*Chile.*—"The reported financial curtailments in Chile seem very heavy, but it is stated that the schools are functioning in much their normal way."

"Though we have in South Africa been hit by the depression just as much as the United States", declares E. G. Malherbe, director of education in South Africa and a recent visitor to the United States, "we have to a large extent spared our educational system the shock of the blow."

What is true of South Africa is true of other countries. Belgium, Bulgaria, Albania, Denmark, France, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Luxemburg, and Switzerland are among the European countries which have maintained their school systems in the face of depression.

# EDUCATION

★ EVEN in these days of tremendously pressing problems, to my mind the most important question of all is, What are we going to do about our schools? That education should be universal goes without saying. By education I mean more than the three R's. I believe that every child should be given all the education that he can reasonably absorb. This does not mean that all children should spend an equal number of years in school or that all should take the same courses. It means that everyone in order to have the best chance possible for a happy and full life should have every bit of education that he is capable of receiving and of using to advantage.

HAROLD L. ICKES
SECRETARY OF THE INTERIOR